

# Child Care Business Exchange

TENNESSEE CHILD CARE FACILITIES CORPORATION

November 2003

The Tennessee Department of Human Services

Volume 3 No. 4

## DIRECTORS:

### The Power of Professionalism

By Linda Jarrett, President

Tennessee Association for the Education of Young Children

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Early childhood educators do not always garner the respect and appreciation that other professionals enjoy. This dilemma is clearly illustrated by the low wages, limited benefits and frequent turnover in the field. Parents are now recognized as being a child's first teacher, but caregivers may not enjoy the same status. Indeed, many still think of an infant or toddler teacher as just the baby sitter. Yet recent research supports the important role that early childhood caregivers play in the brain development of young children. Ultimately, the care children receive during this crucial period can help determine their intellectual potential. Few other jobs carry such a heavy responsibility. It is up to early childhood educators to foster a change in public opinion so they can enjoy the respect they deserve. Early childhood professionals, who have pride in themselves and their career choice, build strong relationships and are eager to learn and grow, will harness the power of professionalism and reap its rewards.

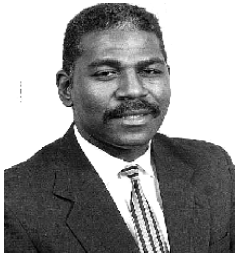
Professionals take pride in both their appearance and their performance. They are clean, neat and appropriately dressed for the job. After all, first impressions are important. They are punctual, dependable, and trustworthy. They pay attention to details and give more than is demanded. Their attitude demonstrates their



confidence, success and experience. Today's parents are informed and caring. They are actively searching for caregivers whom they consider to be a substitute for themselves. In short, early childhood caregivers should present themselves as professional peers of the parents they serve.

Professionals realize that their relationships with people are vitally important. They support their administration and promote the policies of their organization. When a problem arises, professionals handle the matter quickly and refrain from criticizing their superiors to parents or coworkers. They share ideas and cooperate with their peers. They do not participate in work place gossip. Professionals see parents as their partners in the educational process. They volunteer their time, money and energy to community service.

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**John D. Garnett**, *Executive Director*

A leader must have credibility in an organization to be effective. More specifically, the leader needs to have credible authority to make decisions to gain staff compliance. In order for staff members to perform with dedication and enthusiasm, they must **R-E-S-P-E-C-T** the leader's expertise, judgement, and believe in his or her vision for the organization. A leader with credibility and respect can inspire staff members to make the extra effort and hang in there during times of crisis.

There are several instances where our credibility is challenged.

**In a Crisis Situation-** many of us have been in the situations where we had to step up to the plate and make quick decisions for the betterment of organization.

**As a New Director-**taking a position where the previous Director was well loved by staff members. The new Director has to develop enough instant credibility to carry on the job without attacking his or her predecessor.

**The Often-Absent Director-**a Director may find it necessary to spend a great deal of time away from the organization in a special project. The net effect of this effort may bring in thousands of dollars for the program. While staff members may appreciate this in a general sense, what may have a more immediate and negative impact is the fact that the director is not around to take on problems.

**A Growing Program-** during a period of rapid expansion, a director may be required to spend more time on administrative tasks, and less time with the staff. Staff may view this change as a personal rejection.

The assumption is that just because the Director works very hard, is a wonderful person, and doing a great job, this will automatically translate into credibility. We assume that our expertise, dedication, and professionalism will always show. This is not always true. No one sees the complete picture, and unfortunately, everyone tends to evaluate us in terms of the piece they see.

In general credibility is established in three ways. 1) You gain role credibility simply by occupying the position of director. You may lose it if you prove to be an ineffective director, however it comes with the position. 2) You may earn credibility by displaying your knowledge in the tasks you perform. 3) Your credibility is enhanced when you demonstrate that you are effective leader by supervising, motivating staff, setting priorities, and pursuing a vision for your program.

- **Increase Your Presence**

The more staff see you on the floor, the more you notice and acknowledge staff efforts and achievement, the more they will believe you are in touch with what is going on.

The following are some specific approaches provided by Jim Greenman in the Art of Leadership, Managing Early Childhood Organizations:

- **Bring a Reliable Resource**

Staff members need to know that when they have exhausted

all their ideas for dealing with a problem or an opportunity that you are always there as a dependable resource.

- **Being An Effective Trainer**

The director should really be prepared to do his or her best training for his or her own staff arrangements that correspond to their preferences, are important as

- **Activity Cultivating Allies**

It can be very helpful to have loyal allies on the staff. Allies can help present your story to the staff and be effective in translating the message to the other members of the organization when and issue comes up.

- **Empathizing with the Staff**

A director can generate credibility by showing an awareness of what the teacher's role is all about. You want to be able to truthfully say, "I know how you feel; I understand your perspective on a particular issue."

- **Being Decisive**

It is important that you make decisions on a timely basis and that you announce them clearly, without ambiguity or apology. Solicit staff input before making decisions, take all the time you need when making big decisions, and admit when you are wrong and reverse poor decisions.

*Bottom line, the most important source of our credibility is our performance.*

## The Power of Professionalism cont.



Professionals seek opportunities to improve their qualifications. In the state of Tennessee, early childhood professionals may choose to further their education by enrolling in a Child Development Associate (CDA), a Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA), an Associate's Degree, or a Bachelor's Degree program. They may attend the free training provided by the Tennessee Child Care Provider Training Grant (TN CCPT). Early childhood educators can enhance their skills by joining professional organizations like Tennessee Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC), National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI), or Tennessee School

Age Care Association (TN SACA), etc. These organizations offer membership publications and conferences that report the latest research and a chance to network with other educators.

Early childhood educators have their challenges and rewards. While they may suffer from an image problem, they also have the satisfaction of knowing they are shaping the future of America, one mind at a time. When they accentuate their personal qualities, bolster their relationships and enhance their job skills, early childhood educators will know the power of professionalism.

## Delegating Authority in Child Care Centers

Many child care directors or owners are afraid to delegate authority to their employees because they are afraid that they will be seen as passing the buck. This is not necessarily true in most cases. Most employees expect that they'll have to carry the ball along with you in order to have a successful operation. Furthermore, most people want to feel important enough to the operation to be asked to do some of the boss's work. But even if this weren't so, it's imperative for other urgent reasons that you learn to delegate a good portion of your personal workload.

Delegation is an essential ingredient of good management. In fact, many times it's the only way that you'll be able to keep your head above water. The average managerial job is so fraught with responsibilities that you could worry yourself into an 80-hour, jam-packed week just checking on

every detail yourself. If you allow yourself to fall into that pattern you are going to have a difficult time being an effective supervisor due to the stress of the workload.

Delegation means, of course, that you've got to trust others on your staff to do the job nearly as effectively as you'd do it yourself. And if you can force yourself to leave them alone, they usually will. With a big difference, however, others won't do the job exactly the way you'd do it yourself. They'll also regard some factors as more important than you think they are. Worse still, they'll overlook or ignore some other factors that you think demand top priority. That's the way of delegation! So learn to accept the fact of less-than-perfect results and to delegate just the same. Without delegation, you won't be able to make the grade as a supervisor and still maintain your

peace of mind.

In delegating to make better use of your time, there are two important rules to follow:

- 1) Try not to spend time working on task's that are below your capabilities. These are the things that you can do, but that others should be doing for you.
- 2) Don't give up your priorities to a series of trivial jobs while putting the big job on hold. It's important that you take on the big job first. If the trivial jobs are urgent, then you should delegate them right away to the most qualified staff members.



# Business Section

## Time Management

by Nancy Seely  
Adult Education Specialist



### Tips for Planning Your Day

First of all, visualize your long-term picture of success and put it in writing. Review your goals frequently. Goals should be specific, measurable, achievable and compatible with your present situation. There should be an end date as well. Steven Covey calls this "Begin with the end in mind."

- Try to plan at the same time every day. Use this time to review past accomplishments as well as future things to do.
- Use only one planner to keep track of your personal and business appointments.
- Write out a "To Do" list every day. Be specific and include items that can be completed.
- Prioritize your "To Do" list into three categories: items important to your success, urgent items but not quite as important, and those that would be nice to do if you get time.
- Check off the items as you complete them, which will give you a sense of accomplishment.
- Block off time in your planner for major activities including time for you to work alone on some activities.
- Don't jam your day full of

activities. Leave time for emergencies, special opportunities and thinking time.

- Create a block of time during non-prime hours to handle paperwork. Schedule this in your planner and stick to it.
- Never handle a piece of paper Sort through and handle papers in your in-basket no more than twice per day.
- Block off times in your planner to process your e-mail. Twice per day should be enough, and avoid the temptation to check it more often.
- Be responsible. Determine if you have met your goals and what changes you plan to make to achieve them.
- Do it now. Don't procrastinate and put things off.
- Always balance your time between career, family, fitness, recreation, social and spiritual activities.
- Evaluate how you spend your time and energy and make changes if necessary.

### Getting More from Less

"Eighty percent of profits from 20% of customers." "80% of a teacher's time is taken up by 20% of the students." "80% of this, is caused by 20% of that." These observations refer to the 80/20 Rule, also known as Pareto's Principle after Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), an Italian economist who observed the applicability of the principle in everything from economics to the productivity of beans in his garden.

The 80/20 Rule has enormous mean-

ing for managing your time and your life. 80% of your time is spent doing things that aren't as productive as the other 20%. Discover which of your activities are the "vital few," and separate them from "the trivial many." Do this often, and you will stay focused, reduce stress, increase productivity, save money, increase profits, help more people, find more solutions, and accomplish more goals.

### Stop Procrastinating

First, you should recognize that procrastination stems from habit. New habits will be needed and will take time and commitment to develop. Harold Taylor defines procrastination as the intentional habitual postponement of an important task that should be done immediately.

You can stop procrastinating by working on task and your environment.

In handling tasks train yourself to complete the unpleasant tasks first. Schedule them for early in the day and reward yourself for doing them. Usually they don't turn out to be as bad as you first thought they would be. If you are working on a large project don't just keep putting it off. Breaking large jobs into smaller tasks makes it more manageable and you see that you are making progress and you won't feel overwhelmed. As for your work environment it should be conducive to getting the job done. Remove barriers that inhibit your progress.



## How I Got Started in the Childcare Business

by Eunice R. Harris

I had a career change at 40. After 21 years in Memphis City School System as an assistant principle and special education classroom educator, I retired. The experiences and opportunities I received in MCS prepared me for my future destiny in early childhood education.

My life was redirected due to an unexpected bundle of joy given to my husband, Reverend Martin Harris and me. We named her **Nia** that means "**purpose**" in Swahili. I believe in divine guidance. Nothing happens by chance, in my opinion. Situations, people and opportunities are all apart of my journey to help others learn to be life long learners. My **mission in life** focuses on the strong development of life long learners, thus **Sunrise of Sherwood Community Service, Incorporated** was founded for this purpose.

### Steps I took to Success:

- I did a **S.W.O.T. analysis** on myself (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)
- In the beginning- go to the sources. First I sought help from the Department of Human Services Childcare Licensing to find out requirements and regulations. Our policies and procedures at our facility are

based on the guidelines of the authorities to whom we must answer to.

- Childcare is a business and proper training is crucial. Through DHS I discovered the **Tennessee Child Care Facilities Corporation's** Small Business Saturday Training . It provided the nucleus to getting started in childcare from the business aspect. I had an educational base, but through this program, my husband and I received a foundation on what to do, when to do it, who to contact. The pros and cons of building a successful, quality business. We came away from this experience knowing three essentials are necessary to survive in business—an excellent insurance agent, accountant and lawyer.



- My financial backing mainly came from three sources: loans based on our excellent personal credit history, personal savings and promissory notes. I learned quickly financial institutions want collateral. They are not so concerned about your bright ideas and visions as they are with how they will get paid in the event your business folds.
- Martin and I researched the area through the Chamber of Commerce and used statistics from the latest census reports.

- We worked in every capacity to understand what it takes to fulfill each job. We advertised, served as our own public relations agency, planned and taught the lessons, we did all the cleaning, cooking, transporting, hiring, attended evening college classes after work and seminars on weekends. We scheduled appointments with bankers, community services agencies, and organizations to develop relationships.
- Budget. I had to create one. I had to decide when to hire an expert or do it myself. For example, with the help of our financial consultant, Michael Minor, associate professor at LeMoyne-Owens College, I applied and received 501c3 non-profit organizational status in three weeks! Also, I wrote a strategic business plan with his guidance. He taught us that a well-written business plan establishes your direction for present and future growth and development. I found this to be true. Also, I hired an accountant and purchased the software recommended. I paid for her services to teach me how to complete given tasks such as payroll, quarterly report, and other general tasks. Many times, like the old saying goes, "I had to rob Peter to pay Paul," so to speak.

- I read, read, read. I became knowledgeable in every aspect that related to starting and maintaining a quality childcare agency. I talked with people at code enforcement, the health department, contractors, architects, plumbers, electricians, vendors, etc.

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## Child Care and the Working Poor

About two-thirds of working-poor families are headed by dual-earner or single working parents (Hofferth, 1995). For the two-parent families, it may be possible to keep child care entirely within the family, if the parents are able and willing to coordinate their work schedules. For many, however, that is not possible. In 1990, only 22 percent of dual-employed parents—regardless of income—were able to cover their child care needs without relying on another provider (Brayfield et al., 1993).

The vast majority of working-poor parents (62 percent of mothers, 64 percent of fathers) earned under \$5 per hour at their main job in 1989 (Hofferth, 1995).

Their need for low-cost child care, particularly given the large number of hours for which they typically need care, is evident. As revealed by the economic analyses summarized above, absent low-cost options or assistance with child care fees, these families need for child care can become a barrier to work.

Child care plays a pivotal role in keeping parents employed, as well as in helping those formerly on public assistance move into the paid labor force. Access to free or low-cost care or, absent this, to financial assistance with child care fees appears to be a critical element of successful efforts to promote economic self-sufficiency among families with young children. A major tension involves the distribution of available subsidies for working-poor segments of the population. But cost of care is not the only issue that warrants careful consideration

in efforts to promote self-sufficiency. It appears that attention to issues of safety and reliability, as well as efforts to help parents make arrangements that correspond to their preferences, are important as well.



## Employers need to bring hiring criteria into Information Age

Today's employee candidates come with new expectations and circumstances we have either refused to acknowledge or have completely overlooked. The 21<sup>st</sup> century employee candidate is no longer looking for a lifelong career and is not willing to continually sacrifice his or her personal and/or family life for the betterment of the corporation.

Today's employee wants more vacation time, more overall freedom on the job, less supervision and a greater piece of the corporate pie, which the news media often portray as "excessive corporate greed".

Because the expectation of the long-term employment is no longer valid, the 21<sup>st</sup> century employee's mindset is on short-term career opportunity. Overlooking these new elements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century employee candidate has made it significantly more difficult to find and attract the talent our businesses need to thrive and prosper. The well-qualified 21<sup>st</sup> century

employee candidate's typically show career movement every 24-36 months, continual advancement in career goals and ongoing education—whether in universities or in seminars. Today's employees are not always desirous of upward movement and may often change directions midstream if not satisfied with where their careers have taken them. The old rules simply do not apply anymore.



## Make Meetings Worth Going To

### Meetings: if not run well can be inefficient and a waste of time

Too often, those who run meetings "don't keep people on the point. They may be trying to be polite, but you're not being polite to people in terms of their time."

The rap on meetings isn't just anecdotal. The 3M company spent more than a decade looking into the subject. Its research found that as much as 50% of meeting time is unproductive, and up to 25% is spent discussing irrelevant issues.

Another study reports that most professionals attend more than 61 meetings every month, and more than half the meeting time is wasted. That adds up to four days of lost productivity, according to the web site, [effectivemeetings.com](http://effectivemeetings.com).

## TECFE

## New Initiative

### Nashville Sees Nashville Supports Early Education



Bonny Logan, *Program Coordinator*

Quality early care and education is linked to a well- educated workforce and healthy community. If children are going to have long-term success in school and work, they need to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Nashville Supports Early Education Staff (SEES) is a child care improvement initiative designed to

provide qualified and affordable substitute child care teachers to Nashville area Head Start Programs, family and child care center based programs.

This research-based child care initiative addresses a top priority need in the child care industry-a qualified professional workforce. Nashville SEES will positively impact more than 13,000 children in and around the Davidson county area. Tennessee Voices for Children Inc., is the lead agency for this project.

Tennessee Voices for Children Inc., is a statewide, not-for-profit, non-partisan organization of families, professionals, business and community leaders, and government representatives committed to improving and expanding services related to the emotional and

behavioral well-being of children. The Nashville SEES initiative coincides with the mission of Tennessee Voices to offer technical assistance opportunities to families and service providers. For further information about the program, contact Bonny Logan, Program Coordinator, at (615) 269-7751.



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#### FRONTLINE MANAGEMENT

##### (IN THE TRENCHES)

**What is a simple outline for writing a corrective Letter? The last one I wrote showed my frustration and anger, but wasn't very useful in documenting my employee's performance problems.**

Corrective letters help employees improve performance as well as provide documentation of the problem and required actions. The following outline supports both these purposes: (1) Description of the performance problem. (2) Statement regarding past discussions or warnings about the performance problem. (3) Statement of undesirable effects the performance problem or behavior has on the organization. (4) Statement of changes required in performance and when the changes are expected. (5) Possible consequences for failure to make performance changes. (6) Statement of support for what is valued about employee's performance or abilities. (7) Plan of action for follow up by supervisor. (8) Statement thanking employee for attention to matters addressed in the letter. (9) Statement inviting employee to speak to supervisor if clarification is needed regarding any part of the letter.





## How I Got Started (cont.)

- I networked with people in the field of early childhood. I enrolled in Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) at Southwest Community College. This later became a requirement for future employees. I followed my instinct, experience and expert advice. I questioned when I didn't agree or understand. I sought advice from others with experience in early childhood education like Ruby White at Joyland Child Development Center. She shares valuable tools of the trade with us, for which I will be eternally grateful.
- Screened/hired qualified personnel. My experience as an administrator in the school system taught me both

essential formal and informal techniques in hiring practices. Thoroughly check background history and seek persons with related experiences or willingness to return to college for childcare training. I sought energetic and flexible people with a desire to be part of an effective team. I monitored and documented effectively during probationary periods. Also, I found maintaining a flexible floater keeps your program operating smoothly. This person is trained to work in numerous capacities, such as a secondary caregiver, teacher's aide, cook, custodian, or bus monitor.

- I joined professional organizations like NAEYC and attended work shops,

conferences and meetings. We received training in CPR, transportation regulations, sanitation issues and other relevant areas.

- In my second year of existence, I wrote and received the Program for Infant/Toddler Care Model Site Grant through the Tennessee State University Center for Excellence where observers can view best practices in process in our facility.

In summary, Martin and I invested long hours with personal sacrifices. We are a long way from "arriving". We are always monitoring and seeking improvement.

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[Carolyn.Stafford@state.tn.us](mailto:Carolyn.Stafford@state.tn.us)



Tennessee Department of Human Services, Authorization No. 345729, August 2003, 1000 copies. This publication promulgated at a cost of .02 cents per copy.

